

## New Jersey: Thomas Lowrey<sup>81</sup>

Thomas Lowrey was born in Ireland, on September 3, 1737, thus making him one of two immigrants to join the first “class” of the U.S. Marshal Service. At the age of ten, Lowrey and his family settled in Flemington, New Jersey. At 13-years-old, he became a landowner after buying 650 square feet from his future father-in-law, on which he eventually built a shop.<sup>82</sup> Prior to the American Revolution, Lowrey worked as a shopkeeper, landowner, and local businessman. As Lowrey’s various enterprises began to thrive, he became a prominent citizen in his local community, where he and his wife donated the land for the first church in Flemington.<sup>83</sup>

When American Revolution began in 1775, Lowrey was a member of the first provincial Congress for New Jersey and also received a lieutenant colonel’s commission in his local militia unit. Despite being an officer in the New Jersey militia, Lowrey never participated in combat. Instead, Lowrey served as a commissary officer, who was responsible for supplying forces of the Continental Army during the war.<sup>84</sup> Additionally, Lowrey met George Washington at least once during the war, because he asked Washington for the appointment of U.S. marshal for the state of New Jersey later in his career.<sup>85</sup> Washington granted Lowrey’s request in the fall of 1789.



A Sketch of Thomas Lowrey  
Courtesy of the U.S. Marshals Service

Like his other 15 colleagues, Lowrey was responsible for overseeing his deputies as they counted the population of New Jersey for the 1790 census. According to available records, it appears New Jersey was the first state to complete the 1790 census, and counted 184,139 people.<sup>86</sup> Lowrey completed New Jersey’s census return on April 2, 1791.<sup>87</sup> However, the British destroyed the 1790 census schedules—the documents containing the detailed information about the enumeration—for New Jersey during the War of 1812. As a result, all

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<sup>81</sup> Sometimes also spelled Lowry and Lowery

<sup>82</sup> “Colonel Thomas Lowrey”, Find A Grave, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/32095572/thomas-Lowrey>. (Accessed Nov 18, 2019).

<sup>83</sup> “History - The First Generation of United States Marshals/The First Marshal of New Jersey: Thomas Lowrey,” U.S. marshals Service, last estimated release October 11, 2019, <https://www.usmarshals.gov/history/firstmarshals/Lowrey.htm>. (Accessed October 18, 2019).

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> “To George Washington from Thomas Lowrey, 24 August 1789,” *Founders Online*, National Archives, last estimated release September 29, 2019, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-03-02-0308>. (Accessed October 18, 2019). [Original source: *The Papers of George Washington*, Presidential Series, vol. 3, 15 June 1789–5 September 1789, ed. Dorothy Twohig. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1989, pp. 533–534.]

<sup>86</sup> “New Jersey”. *Return of the whole number of persons within the several districts of the United States: according to “An act providing for the enumeration of the inhabitants of the United States,” passed March the first, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-one*, pg. 44, PDF. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/content/census/en/library/publications/1793/dec/number-of-persons.htm>. (Accessed October 18, 2019).

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

information about Lowrey's conduct of the census comes from other documents in the state archives and private collections.

After completing the census, Lowrey continued to perform his other duties as a marshal. He also served as member of both the New Jersey Assembly in 1791 and 1792 and the Hunterdon County Board of Chosen Freeholders (1791-1794). Shortly after taking office in 1801, President Thomas Jefferson removed many of the remaining U.S. marshals, who were appointed under Presidents Washington and Adam because of their affiliation with the Federalist political party. So, after almost a decade of serving his community and nation, Lowrey retired to his home in Flemington where he passed away on November 11, 1806.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> "History - The First Generation of United States Marshals/The First Marshal of New Jersey: Thomas Lowrey".